

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 178021

PASS AMB WARNKE

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM NEW DELHI DATED JULY 13, 1978
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO KABUL IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 10699

KABUL FOR UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGSC MNUC TECT IN

SUBJECT: INDIA AND THE CTB

REF: STATE 174235

1. THE FACT THAT NEITHER THE FONSEC NOR THE FONMIN ACCOMPANIED THE PM ON HIS RETURN APPARENTLY ACCOUNTS FOR THE PM NOT HAVING BEEN REMINDED TO ANNOUNCE INDIA'S READINESS TO SIGN A GENUINE, FIVE-YEAR CTB (ONE SUCH AS WAS DESCRIBED TO HIM BY THE PRESIDENT) IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING HIS LANDING IN DELHI.

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2. NOW, HOWEVER, FONSEC MEHTA SAYS A PROBLEM HAS ARISEN. THE GOI IS TROUBLED BY THE JULY 1 NEW YORK TIMES STORY OVER THE BY-LINE OF RICHARD BURT WHICH SAYS THAT U.S. MILITARY AND NUCLEAR EXPERTS HAVE FORCED A CHANGE IN OUR POSITION SO THAT CERTAIN KINDS OF TESTING WILL BE PERMITTED AND THE DURATION OF THE CTB WILL BE REDUCED TO 3 YEARS.

MEHTA INDICATED THAT THESE REPORTED CHANGES IN THE PROSPECTIVE CTB ARE VERY DISTURBING TO THE GOI, AND HE SEEMED TO BE SAYING THAT INDIA WOULD NOT BECOME A PARTY TO SO LIMITED A CTB. SINCE WE HAD NOT SEEN THE NEW YORK TIMES STORY OR BEEN ALERTED TO THESE POSSIBLE CHANGES IN THE U.S. POSITION, I WAS CAUGHT AT A LOSS AND COULD ONLY OFFER TO SEEK CLARIFICATION. PLEASE PROVIDE GUIDANCE ASAP.

3. LET ME ADD THAT I FELT IT EMBARRASSING TO BOTH UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM AND MYSELF TO HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO RAISE WITH THE GOI THE MATTER OF INDIA'S COMMITMENT TO SIGN A CTB, AS WE DID YESTERDAY WITH V. SHANKAR AND JAGAT MEHTA, WITHOUT HAVING BEEN GIVEN ANY WARNING OF THIS ALLEGED CHANGE IN WAHT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT. EVEN IF BURT'S STORY DOES NOT CORRECTLY PORTRAY THE CURRENT U.S. POSITION, THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD KNOW THAT A STROY LIKE THIS, ON A TOPIC OF SO MUCH INTEREST TO THE GOI, IN AN "AUTHORITIATIVE" NEWSPAPER LIKE THE TIMES, IS BOUND TO BE FLASHED TO THE GOI AND DRAW ITS ATTENTION. IN SUCH SITUATIONS THE EMBASSY NEEDS A COMPARABLE ALERT, TOGETHER WITH GUIDANCE.
GOHEEN
UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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